

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the objection and rejection, and further examination are requested.

Claims 1-4 were pending in this application. Claims 1-3 stand rejected and claim 4 was objected to as containing allowable subject matter. Claim 4 is amended herein and claims 1-3 are cancelled herein. No new matter has been added.

The Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 4 contains allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the objections discussed in the Office Action. In view of this indication, claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form to include the claim amendments suggested by the Examiner. Specifically, in claim 4, lines 1-2 have been amended to recite "...a plurality of discharge cells, each discharge cell being formed..," and line 13 has been amended to recite "... the duration of the second sustaining period..."

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Hashimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,369,781) (hereinafter referred to as "Hashimoto"). Claims 1-3 are cancelled herein, thus rendering the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of these claims moot.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, claim 4 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe there are any remaining issues that must be resolved before this application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenji OGAWA et al.

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April 30, 2008